

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

This analysis of Cruella (2021) shows how Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is used to illustrate the film's depiction of the complexities of human motivation and personal development. Cruella's journey from a young, suffering woman named Estella to a self-assured, aspirational fashion superstar serves as an example of how meeting and upsetting different needs affects a person's actions and decisions. Estella's life has been characterized from the start by an unstable environment and the untimely death of her mother, which has left her basic requirements for safety and physiology unsatisfied. Her survival rests on her capacity to think quickly and adapt, as well as on her connections with Jasper and Horace, who provide her the stability and belonging she first lacks.

As the story progresses, Cruella's actions reveal her gradual ascent up Maslow's hierarchy of needs, shifting from basic needs to the pursuit of esteem and self-actualization. Her work in the fashion industry serves as both a source of income and a platform for creative expression, fulfilling her need for esteem through recognition and admiration. However, the emergence of her alter ego, "Cruella," signals a change in priorities. Her pursuit of esteem becomes intertwined with her desire for revenge, indicating that her unresolved needs for safety and belonging continue to influence her pursuit of higher-level fulfillment. This complexity demonstrates that Maslow's progression is not strictly linear and that individuals may revisit earlier needs while striving for self-actualization.

The conflict with the Baroness is a pivotal moment in her journey, illustrating the dual nature of ambition according to Maslow's framework. While ambition can be a powerful force for growth and self-realization, it can become destructive when it overshadows empathy and trust. Cruella's strategic manipulation, bold public displays, and calculated risks reflect her mastery of esteem-seeking behaviors. However, they also reveal an ongoing tension between self-actualization and the moral compromises made to achieve it. This tension is evident in her willingness to sacrifice personal relationships for her identity and vision.

The film emphasizes that self-actualization is deeply personal and not inherently tied to conventional morality, as portrayed through Cruella. Her final transformation into Cruella de Vil represents the realization of her self-defined potential, as she embraces her unique style, independence, and leadership abilities. However, this achievement is not without ethical ambiguity. The film challenges viewers to consider whether reaching the top of Maslow's hierarchy necessarily equates to achieving a universally "good" or socially beneficial state. Instead, the film presents self-actualization as the realization of one's authentic self, regardless of societal approval.

To sum up, analyzing Cruella from the standpoint of Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides a complex understanding of her development. Her experience demonstrates that achieving self-actualization is rarely a straightforward process but rather a dynamic one impacted by social interactions, ambition, personal ideals, and past traumas. The movie deepens our comprehension of the psychological effects that shape human behavior by showing how unfulfilled wants from previous

phases can reappear and affect higher-level goals. As a result, Cruella functions as a multi-layered case study of the difficulties of identity creation, motivation, and perseverance in addition to being an enjoyable story.

5.2 Suggestion

Based on the findings of this analysis, I would like to offer several suggestions, drawing from both academic insights and personal reflection, on how to examine Cruella through Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. First, it is important for audiences to see Cruella as both an entertaining work of fiction and a reflection of how basic human needs influence behavior. The film vividly illustrates how unmet needs at the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy, such as safety and belonging, can influence a person's choices and identity. Cruella's struggle to secure stability and recognition mirrors real-life situations in which individuals adapt, compromise, or defy social expectations to fulfill those needs. We often see in reality how difficult circumstances push people to act boldly, sometimes at the cost of conventional morality.

Second, this research made me reflect on how Cruella's journey from survival to self-actualization is not unique. In the real world, people from disadvantaged backgrounds often work hard to improve their lives and, like Cruella, may encounter risks and sacrifices along the way. However, once higher needs such as esteem are met, there is a possibility that individuals might repeat some of the same exclusive or controlling behaviors they once opposed. This observation highlights a danger within Maslow's model: the fulfillment of higher needs can sometimes be pursued at the expense of empathy for others, particularly when ambition overshadows values.

Third, I hope viewers take away from Cruella the reminder that the pursuit of esteem and self-actualization should not come at the expense of relationships and ethical integrity. Cruella's shifting bond with Horace and Jasper serves as a warning of how personal ambition can strain or damage essential connections. As Maslow's theory suggests, the need for belonging is relevant at every stage of growth. Losing sight of this need can lead to isolation, even at the peak of success. I believe we should ask ourselves if achieving our goals would feel fulfilling if it meant losing the trust and companionship of those who supported us along the way.

Fourth, for those interested in exploring similar narratives, I suggest paying attention to how the stages of Maslow's hierarchy interact with each other in the story. In Cruella, progress is rarely linear; safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization often overlap and influence one another in complex ways. This mirrors real life, where unresolved needs from earlier stages can hinder achieving creative or professional fulfillment. Recognizing these overlaps helps us understand that personal growth is not only about moving upward in the hierarchy but also about maintaining balance among all levels.

Finally, I believe that Cruella encourages us to reflect on our journeys toward self-actualization. The film challenges us to consider how our personal ambitions align with our values, and if our pursuit of success allows for empathy and fairness. In both fiction and reality, our journey to fulfilling our highest potential is shaped by how we meet our foundational needs and treat others along the way. Viewing Cruella through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs reminds us that true self-actualization means realizing our talents in a way that preserves integrity, relationships, and compassion.